

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MONTHLY REPORT

FEBRUARY 2008

I. Improve the efficiency and accountability of management within the organization

I made a number of organizational and staffing changes in January to enhance the efficiency, productivity, accountability and responsiveness of the organization. I will be working with the Department Directors to implement these changes at the Department and Division level during the month of February, and informed the entire SCAG staff of these changes. (Attached is SCAG's new organizational chart)

II. Provide support to the Regional Council in providing direction and leadership to SCAG

A. Summary of Significant Meetings

- On January 11th, I attended the Regionwide CEO meeting at MTA. I spoke to the CEOs about SCAG's new direction and the future work that we need to do together on behalf of our region.
- On January 17th, I attended the South Orange County Association of Mayors Meeting and briefed them on the Draft 2008 Regional Transportation Plan and SCAG employment and housing forecasts.
- On January 23rd, I met with Will Kempton, Gregg Albright and Joan Sollenberger of Caltrans in Sacramento. We discussed future cooperation between the agencies on planning and OWP issues. We also discussed the pending audit issues regarding the San Gabriel Valley COG and OCCOG, and concluded that we would work towards resolving these issues in the near future.
- On January 30th, staff met with David Ream, City Manager of Santa Ana, who expressed interest in having the City become a SCAG member. Prior to recommending this to the City Council, Mr. Ream will convene a meeting with the City's Executive Management team to learn about services available to SCAG members and to identify City priorities where SCAG may be aligned for support and assistance.

B. Transportation Conformity for the 2008 RTP

- On January 24, 2008, staff participated in a teleconference with representatives from the federal agencies (FHWA, FTA, US EPA, and ARB) to discuss the draft transportation conformity analysis for the Draft 2008 RTP. At that meeting, SCAG staff was informed about a lack of progress involving the U.S. EPA's adequacy finding for the transportation emission budgets for 8-hour ozone and PM2.5 for the South Coast Air Basin. This is critical for adoption of the 2008 RTP as a formal finding of conformity cannot be made until U.S. EPA determines the adequacy of the emission budgets. U.S. EPA's lack of progress in reviewing and approving the emission budgets came as a surprise to SCAG staff as federally required interagency consultation is held on a monthly basis via the SCAG's Transportation Conformity Working Group (TCWG), and this critical information and issue has not been raised or discussed at the prior interagency meetings of TCWG. SCAG and other responsible agencies have done their due diligence to develop the South Coast 8-hour ozone and PM2.5 transportation emission budgets and to provide adequate time for EPA review and approval. Historically, EPA has taken no more than three months to approve the emission budgets included in the SIP, irrespective of SIP approval. In this case, the 8-hour ozone and PM2.5 SIPs were submitted by ARB to the U.S. EPA on November 28, 2007. Based upon past practice, this should have provided sufficient time for the U.S. EPA and ARB to resolve any issues regarding the budgets.

SCAG staff expressed its concern to the federal agencies about the lack of progress in the U.S. EPA's adequacy finding for the transportation emission budgets for the 8-hour ozone and PM2.5 for the South Coast Air Basin. Staff is working with the federal agencies to resolve this critical issue and will keep the Regional Council apprised of future developments.

C. Rail Business Case: A Proposed Public- Private Partnership

- On January 18th, I attended a meeting in Sacramento with the Chief of Staff and legislative directors for Senator Lowenthal, Senator Runner, and Senator Dutton to discuss Senate Bill 974. SB 974 (Lowenthal) would impose user-fees on the owners of containerized cargo to finance projects that reduce congestion and mitigate the air quality impacts associated with goods movement. SCAG met with respective senate staff to discuss facilitating better coordination with other public and private financing sources--to effectively leverage additional funding. Specifically, SCAG discussed combining public and private investments to construct rail capacity for freight and passenger train operations in Southern California, reduce the air quality impacts of rail by accelerating deployment of cleaner engines, and help mitigate traffic through construction of high priority grade separations. Key aspects of the investment package will be discussed further with the railroads, county transportation commissions, and state legislators over the coming weeks.